

HB 2310 – Connect Oregon V

House Transportation and Economic Development Committee

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The Association of Oregon Counties strongly supports funding for Connect Oregon V. Thanks to previous rounds of Connect Oregon, the state has invested in freight and public transit projects to improve our competitive standing, directly creating and retaining jobs. These aviation, marine, rails, transit and multi-modal projects are aimed at:

- Reducing transportation costs for Oregon businesses;
- Improving access to jobs and sources of labor;
- Providing economic benefits; and
- Addressing critical transportation linkages.

Local governments and businesses often lack sufficient capital and technical capacity (i.e. engineering, planning, labor and/or equipment) to undertake multimodal transportation projects. Recognizing this problem, the State invested \$340 million in the previous Connect Oregon cycles (I, II, III, and IV) to fund 203 projects. With the addition of leveraged funds, the program represents approximately \$834 million in direct investment in multimodal transportation improvements.

The Transportation Commission selected the projects after receiving extensive and collaborative stakeholder and local recommendations through involvement of the Area Commissions on Transportation and transportation modal committees.

Connect Oregon benefits all regions of the state and directly creates much needed jobs. Examples of projects include:

- Upgrading the Tidewater Terminal Company in Umatilla that reduced truck loading times of materials from barges by 40 percent;
- Constructing a Post-Panamax Crane at the Port of Portland for faster loading and unloading;
- Building a one-stop transit hub serving Baker, Union and Wallowa counties that combined fixed route, dial-a-ride, complimentary paratransit and taxi services in one location;

- Increasing the efficiency and capacity of small freight handling facilities and operations at the Rogue Valley International-Medford airport;
- Providing a rail link in Prineville for area businesses that enabled rail access to national and international markets with Oregon Class I railroads; and
- Upgrading the Port of Astoria Pier 2 for freight, research and other operations.

The benefits from Connect Oregon have boosted economies around the state and strengthened our ability to compete and create/retain jobs. We urge support for another round for this highly successful program